

COMMUNITY FORUM
ON
DISPROPORTIONATE MINORITY CONTACT & JUVENILE JUSTICE
(Provides reports to Ethnic Awareness Committee)

The purpose of this Community Forum is to bring together members of your city who share a concern for the welfare of its youth and to discuss the implications of a nationally recognized problem that appears to be looming for our New Hampshire communities.

DISPROPORTIONATE MINORITY CONTACT (DMC)

DMC exists when minority youth come in contact with the juvenile justice system, at any level, in numbers out of proportion with their presence in the population at large.

DEFINITIONS

- ✓ **CONTACT:** Any time a youth comes in contact with police officers or other members of the juvenile justice system for engaging in delinquent behavior.
- ✓ **ARREST:** Any time the youth is taken into custody by police officers for engaging in delinquent behavior.
- ✓ **DIVERSION:** When a youth in custody or arrested for delinquent behavior is referred to a community agency for counseling or other services rather than going to juvenile court.
- ✓ **DELINQUENCY:** When a youth under the age of 17 commits an offense that would be a misdemeanor or a felony if committed by an adult.
- ✓ **PETITION:** The official charging document, similar to an adult criminal complaint, that summons a youth to juvenile court.
- ✓ **ADJUDICATION:** The finding by a judge of the juvenile court that a juvenile committed the offense charged in the Juvenile Petition.
- ✓ **DETENTION:** A youth is securely detained at the Sununu Youth Services Center prior to an adjudication hearing (trial) when the youth's behavior creates sufficient concern for the safety of the youth and/or the community.
- ✓ **COMMITMENT:** A youth is committed to the Sununu Youth Services Center as a consequence of his or her adjudication as a delinquent and the youth's behavior is sufficiently serious to pose a threat to the community.

SOME NATIONAL STATISTICS

- ✓ On a typical day in 2003, **307** of every 100,000 juveniles were in custody.
- ✓ On a typical day in 2003, **190** of every 100,000 white juveniles were in custody.
- ✓ On a typical day in 2003, **502** of every 100,000 minority youth were in custody.

SOME NEW HAMPSHIRE STATISTICS

The juvenile population (ages 10 to 17) in the State of New Hampshire in 2005 reported 6.8% as belonging to a minority racial group.

White / Caucasian	93.2%
Black / African American	1.0%
Hispanic / Latino	2.8%
Asian	1.4%
Pacific Islander	0.1%
Native American	0.2%
Two or More Races	1.4%
ALL MINORITIES	6.8%

The juvenile population in the State of New Hampshire in 2005 who were under the supervision of the NH Division for Juvenile Justice Services reported 10.2% as belonging to a minority racial group.

White / Caucasian	76.1%
Black / African American	2.7%
Hispanic / Latino	6.0%
Asian	0.7%
Pacific Islander	0.1%
Native American	0.2%
Two or More Races	0.5%
ALL MINORITIES	10.2%

The juvenile population in the State of New Hampshire in 2005 who were securely detained while awaiting adjudication for a delinquency petition reported 12.5 % as belonging to a minority racial group.

White / Caucasian	84.8%
Black / African American	2.4%
Hispanic / Latino	7.7%
Asian	0.0%
Pacific Islander	0.0%
Native American	0.0%
Two or More Races	2.1%
ALL MINORITIES	12.5%

The juvenile population in the State of New Hampshire in 2005 who were committed to the Sununu Youth Services Center for secure treatment reported 17.7 % as belonging to a minority racial group.

White / Caucasian	80.9%
Black / African American	7.9%
Hispanic / Latino	8.4%
Asian	0.0%
Pacific Islander	0.0%
Native American	0.0%
Two or More Races	1.4%
ALL MINORITIES	17.7%

DMC REDUCTION EFFORTS

The finding that minority youth are more heavily represented in the juvenile justice system, on its own does not tell us why DMC is present in our communities. The purpose of this forum is to begin a dialog between police, educators, parents, youth and community leaders seeking to identify things the community can do together to prevent all youth from entering the juvenile justice system and reduce the disparity evident among minority youth.

Research being conducted by the NH Division for Juvenile Justice Services finds that youth under DJJS supervision are most frequently struggling with significant stresses at home and have remarkably few positive connections in their communities (jobs, adult mentors, positive activities outside the home). While these findings are not surprising to us, the pervasiveness of these factors across all DJJS clients is startling. These findings also provide a roadmap by which families and communities can better serve the needs of their youth.